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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05

SCCT-01 OMB-01 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5874

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full **DECLONTRCL**
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

BUENOS AIRES 3642

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, ELAB, AR
SUBJECT: CGT INTERVENTOR KIDNAPPED

1. IN THEIR MOST SIGNIFICANT OPERATION SINCE THE MILITARY TAKEOVER MARCH 24, TERRORISTS KIDNAPPED COL. JUAN ALBERTO PITA, MILITARY INTERVENTOR OF THE CGT, SUNDAY EVENING (MAY 30) AS HE WAS DRIVING HOME WITH HIS WIFE NEAR THE CITY OF LA PLATA.

2. FEDERAL AND LOCAL POLICE IMMEDIATELY CORDONED OFF THE SURROUNDING STREETS AND LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE DRAGNET FOR THE ABDUCTORS. PITA, WHO HAD NO BODYGUARD AND HAD TAKEN NO SPECIAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS SINCE BEING NAMED CGT INTERVENTOR A MONTH AGO, WAS APPARENTLY FORCED AT GUNPOINT TO BOARD ANOTHER CAR WHICH DROVE OFF, LEAVING MRS. PITA UNHARMED.

3. THE ARMY GENERAL HIGH COMMAND ISSUED A TERSE STATEMENT ANNOUNCING THE KIDNAPPING. PITA WAS THE HIGHEST RANKING OFFICIAL ATTACKED SINCE THE MARCH 24 COUP. HIS ABDUCTION WAS APPARENTLY TIMED TO EMBARRASS AND DISCREDIT THE GOA ON THE EVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE WHICH OPENED TODAY (JUNE 1) IN GENEVA.

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4. PITA HAD DEFINED HIS MISSION AS A "STRATEGY OF DIALOGUE" BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND LABOR. HE PLEDGED TO COMBAT SUBVERSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND TO FOLLOW THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S DIRECTIVES IN ESTABLISHING A SINGLE, CENTRALIZED AND APOLITICAL LABOR MOVEMENT.

5. PITA HAD MADE IT CLEAR HE INTENDED TO WORK EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH MILITARY OFFICIALS, WHILE MAINTAINING OPEN COMMUNICATIONS WITH LABOR LEADERS "ON CONCRETE SUBJECTS." HE SAID ONLY "AUTHENTIC LEADERS WHO ACT AS GENUINE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ARGENTINE WORKER" WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION.

6. PITA WAS BORN IN SAN CARLOS DE BARILOCHE. HE ENTERED MILITARY ACADEMY IN 1944 AND OCCUPIED A NUMBER OF HIGH POSTS IN THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND. FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS HE SERVED AS CHIEF OF THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF.

7. COMMENT. THE ABDUCTION OF PITA HAS BEEN VIEWED BY MANY AS A "TACTIC OF DESPERATION," A RELATIVELY SIMPLE, LOW-RISK ATTACK CALCULATED TO REAP WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY FOR ARGENTINE TERRORISTS. GOA HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CONCERNED TO PRESENT A UNIFIED FRONT AT THE LABOR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA AND TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS POLICIES OF LOCAL LABOR REORGANIZATION, AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL SYMPATHY IN ITS BATTLE AGAINST SUBVERSIVE TERRORISM.

8. THE KIDNAPPING, HOWEVER, WAS AGAIN A REMARKABLY SMOOTH, SWIFT OPERATION CARRIED OUT IN DAYLIGHT HOURS IN A HEAVILY TRAVELED LOCATION, NOT 20 MINUTES FROM PITA'S HOME.

9. A NUMBER OF ARGENTINE PAPERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE PITA CASE ILLUSTRATES HOW THE BADLY BATTERED TERRORIST GROUPS HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO SPOT ACTIONS AGAINST EASY TARGETS. (TERRORISTS HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES IN RECENT WEEKS, INCLUDING 18 DEAD IN A SPATE OF RAIDS OVER THE WEEKEND.) AS THEY CONTINUE TO SUFFER HEAVY LOSSES, LA OPINION PREDICTS, THE TERRORISTS MAY BE FORCED TO FALL BACK ON ACTIONS THAT PRODUCE THE MOST PUBLICITY WITH THE LEAST WASTE OF THEIR HARD-PRESSED RESOURCES.

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